OVERVIEW OF LAMENTATIONS

Outline of Lamentations

• *Lamentations 1:*

1. Jerusalem Represented as a WEEPING WIDOW [The Affliction and Miseries of Jerusalem]

- An alphabetic acrostic—each of the 22 verses begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- Background: Jerusalem has been desolated. Jeremiah has faithfully warned them, but they did not listen. The people have been carried away captive to Babylonia. This is Jeremiah's *lament* over the ruin of Jerusalem He gives the reason for their captivity —1:5, 8, 9, 14, 18, 20, 22, in which he emphasizes the sins of Judah. (Notable verses: 12, 16)

(1) The City in her calamity —1:1–7

- Her widowhood —1:1
- Forsaken by her friends and lovers —1:2
  – Notice what happens to all her friends.
- No rest —1:3
- Mourning because of their overthrow —1:4
- Her enemies prosper (Why?) —1:5
- No beauty, like hungry harts —1:6
- The memories of Jerusalem —1:7

(2) Judgments — God justified —1:8–11, 18

- The widow speaks only twice in this section, and when she does speak it is a prayer —1:9b, 11b
- She understands why her affliction. —1:8–9a
- What the nations did to her sanctuary —1:10

(3) Passersby — the appeal for sympathy —1:12–19

- Jerusalem declares her woe —1:12–13
- She professes her penitence and just punishment for her iniquity —1:14–16
- She asserts that God was upright in punishing her —1:18–19

(4) Prayer — appeal to the LORD —1:20–22

- Her prayer of confession —1:20
- Jerusalem utters a prayer for vindication against her enemies —1:21–22

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"Salting the Oats"
Lamentations 1 — How does God demonstrate His heart through Jeremiah in His chastening of Jerusalem?

"Salting the Oats"

Lamentations 2 — How does God describe man's response to His chastening of Jerusalem?

• *Lamentations 2:*

2. Jerusalem Presented as a Veiled Woman
[The Destruction of Zion, a Judgment from the LORD]

• Another alphabetic acrostic of 22 verses.

• Lament over the destruction of the city. It is devastated because of God's anger —2:1–6, 21–22.
[Notable verses: 13–14]

(1) Jerusalem — siege and ruin —2:1–14

-1. Jerusalem, "the perfection of beauty" 2:1

Babylon was beautiful. The cities and buildings of Egypt were magnificent. The Greek cities were beautiful also. But Jerusalem was more than all, and the New Jerusalem will be far more beautiful yet. Jerusalem was called "the perfection of beauty."
– Psalm 50:2
– Psalm 48:2

See Ezra 3:10–13 —Why such emotion?

-2. Jerusalem, God's footstool —2:1

See Ps. 99:5; 132:7; Acts 7:47–50 and Isa. 66:1–2.

-3. The LORD has judged Israel —2:2–5

-4. The LORD destroyed His Temple —2:6–7

-5. The LORD destroyed the city —2:8

-6. Her rulers and prophets are rejected —2:9–10

Rulers are captives.

Spiritual darkness on prophets.

Elders are humbled and silent.

-7. Jeremiah weeps over the disaster —2:11–14

(2) Passersby — their scorn and cruel taunts —2:15–16

• Jerusalem again called "the perfection of beauty."

(3) Judgments foretold —2:17

• God's Word and warning have been fulfilled.

(4) Prayer — to the LORD —2:18–22

-1. Jeremiah exhorts to weeping —2:18–19

This is a sign of true repentance.

-2. Jeremiah's prayer —2:20–22

Women had eaten their offspring (v. 20).

The Priest and Prophet had been slain in the sanctuary (v. 20).

Young and old lay dead. The young had been slain by the sword (v. 21).

None escaped the LORD's anger (v. 22).

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• *Lamentations 3:*

3. The WEEPING PROPHET Identifies Himself with the City

[The Suffering of the Prophet]

- An alphabetic acrostic with 3 verses for each letter.
- The weeping Prophet is mourning before Jehovah the Judge. Jeremiah shares his nation's affliction.
- The climax where Israel's brighter day is contrasted with the gloomy night of sorrow experienced by the prophet himself. Jeremiah has hope in his lamentation —3:21–23, 31–32. [Notable verses: 21–26, 31–33, 37, 39–41]

Note:
In this third song, each verse is divided into three members, making in 66 verses in the English. There is a marked climax in this song. It has an ascent and a descent, a crescendo and decrescendo movement before and after it. About the middle of this song, at verse 18, the prophet seems to have reached the deepest night of his misery, "but where the exigency is greatest, help is nearest. The night is succeeded by the morning (vv. 19–21), and with v. 22 breaks the full day."

(1) Jeremiah *shares* in the affliction of Jerusalem —3:1–20

-1. Jeremiah speaks as a representative Israelite (3:1–20).

Jeremiah called Judah to repentance. He sorrowed for them, yet he suffered their punishment, though he was innocent.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a representative man.

Jesus too sorrowed over mankind. Yet, though he too was innocent of all sin, He bore our sins (I Pet. 2:24).

City — prophet, a man of afflictions —3:1–20

- Jeremiah's complaints are similar to those of Job.

3:1	—	Job 9:34
3:2	—	Job 19:8
3:3	—	Job 7:18
3:4	—	Job 7:5
3:5	—	Job 19:6, 12
3:6	—	Job 23:16–17
3:7, 9	—	Job 19:8
3:8	—	Job 30:20
3:10–11	—	Job 16:9
3:12–13	—	Job 16:12–13
3:14	—	Job 30:9
3:15	—	Job 9:18
3:16–18	—	Job 19:10; 30:19

"Salting the Oats"

Lamentations 3 — Note the emotions and the source of strength given in this continuing account of God's chastening of Jerusalem.

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"Salting the Oats"

Lamentations 4 — In this chapter how does God describe the depth of the punishment of His people who are now under His judgement?

(2) Jeremiah's hope —3:21–36

- City — prophet, a man of hope —3:21–36
- "Great is thy faithfulness" —3:22–23
  –1. Israel is not consumed (vv. 31–32). That is because of God's mercies! She deserved to be consumed.
  –2. We deserve hell. It is only because of His mercies that we are not consumed. See Titus 3:5.
- Reasons for hope —3:24–26
- The LORD will not cast off forever —3:27–36

  To bear the yoke in a man's youth —3:27–29

  — The yoke, an instrument of labor. The yoke humbles him (?). The captivity was put to labor.

  A prophecy of Christ (Mic. 5:1 and Lk. 22:64) —Lam. 3:30 [Noting 3:28–32]

  He will have compassion. —3:32

  The Lord does not afflict willingly. —3:33–38

(3) Jeremiah's tearful appeal to the people —3:37–54

- He counsels submission and penitential confession in view of God's righteous judgment

-1. Judgments — God justified —3:37–39

-2. Appeal to the nation —3:40–47

-3. Jeremiah's sorrow —3:48–54

(4) Jeremiah's appeal to the LORD —3:55–66

- He recalls the LORD's faithful blessing in times past, and pleads for the punishment of Jerusalem's destroyers

-1. Jeremiah's praise for his deliverance. —3:55–63

-2. Jeremiah prays for recompense. —3:64–66

• *Lamentations 4:*

4. Jerusalem Represented as GOLD

(Represented as GOLD dimmed, changed, degraded)

[The Present Desolation Contrasted with the Past Splendor]

- Zion's guilt and punishment are described, the whole consisting of four parts: 4:1–6, 7–11, 12–16, 17–22

(1) Pictures of the destruction —4:1–10

- By a series of contrasts, the horrors of the siege are depicted in 4:1–10.
  – The gold and stones of the Temple had been desecrated —4:1
  – The sons of Zion, worth more than gold, were now reckoned as common clay —4:2

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– Terrible famine stalked the city —4:3–10
— Accompanied by horrible cannibalism —4:10
— Greater punishment for them than for Sodom —4:6

(2) The LORD's anger —4:11–16

• Judgments — God is justified

-1. Divine wrath was outpoured —4:11–12
— The kings of earth had thought Jerusalem impregnable —4:12

-2. It was bloody carnage and defilement —4:13–16
— The Prophets and Priests had shed the blood of the innocent. —4:13–14
— Why was there such judgment upon these men? —4:13–14
[We have the same kinds of sins in our day: Unbelief, Immorality ("New morality – including the ordaining of homosexuals), Degeneracy, then JUDGMENT]
— Captivity: rejection, division of Prophets and priests —4:16
[Though they had told the heathen, "They shall no more sojourn here," the heathen did not respect their persons of the Priests and Elders of Israel.]

(3) Israel's vain hopes —4:17–20

• There was great cruelty shown toward them.

• They looked for a nation to save them. —4:17
– Egypt was powerless against the Babylonians.

• Death pursued them. —4:18–19
- The Babylonians hunted them
– They were swift and they are everywhere.

• Violence to king Zedekiah —4:20
– See II Kings 25:4–6

(4) Punishment upon Edom —4:21–22

• Ezek. 25:12–14 and Obadiah 11–14 tell what Edom did during the Babylonian conquest.

• Edom will be judged by the LORD —4:22

• *Lamentations 5:*

5. Imprisonment until the Fall of Jerusalem
[An Appeal to God for Mercy]

• The distress and hope of the prisoners and fugitives are expressed in the form of a prayer. This is a lament over the captivity. Things are not as they were!! The captors did not at all regard the person of the captivities! Here the people speak, in the first person plural, as a corporeal multitude. [Notable verses: 7, 16–17, 21]

"Salting the Oats"

Lamentations 5 — From this passage what do we learn about God and our proper response to Him in times of suffering?

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(1) Calamity —5:1–6

- Reproach for the city (at least 5 things)

(2) Confession —5:7

- It is confession of the sin of their fathers.
- They have borne the iniquities of their fathers.
  - Consider the principle of Ezek. 18:1–4; 19–20. Then read *all* of Ezek. 18. Especially consider v. 32.
  - See Jer. 14:20 and 16:12.

(3) Captivity and suffering —5:8–18

- More calamities (8 things) —5:8–15
  - Consider how terrible this captivity was.

    [The books of II Kings, II Chronicles, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all tell of the fall of Jerusalem. Lamentations alone paints the picture of the real devastation.]
- The line of David no longer reigned, the Temple was destroyed. —5:16–18
  - The crown is fallen (no king). —5:16
  - Zion, the Temple site, is desolate. —5:18

(4) Call to the LORD —5:19–22

- What do these verses say about the LORD?
- What is Jeremiah's question?
- What is his petition?
- These verses echo Ps. 74:1–2; 79:5–8; 80:1–7, and they capture the plea of the faithful remnant for the establishment of the Kingdom (Unger).

END OF LAMENTATIONS

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